



The President's Daily Brief

~~Top Secret~~ 19 December 1966



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DAILY BRIEF
19 DECEMBER 1966

1. South Vietnam

The constituent assembly has decided that the future government should have a vice president to share the pinnacle of power with the president and the prime minister. The delegates had the problem of presidential succession in mind when they voted. They have postponed discussion of just what duties would be shouldered by a vice president.

The assembly has now turned to the issue of local government. Many delegates favor popular elections at all levels. If they get their way, it would mean a general expansion of local autonomy. This would be particularly significant on the crucial province chief level, where incumbents--most of them active military officers--are now appointed by Saigon.

2. Dominican Republic

President Balaguer has reacted negatively and defensively to Ambassador Crimmins' efforts to impress upon him our concern with the growing polarization of political opinion in his country. Balaguer rejected charges that his security forces are unable to discriminate between the Communist and non-Communist left.

He made it clear that he feels a reconciliation between his party and the left-of-center Dominican Revolutionary Party is impossible. He dismissed out of hand the Revolutionary Party's accusation of government complicity in terrorist attacks against leftist groups.

All in all, this kind of mutual suspicion could easily bring on a renewal of dangerous political tensions.

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3. Haiti

The American embassy in Port-au-Prince says there is no doubt that Duvalier is filling his pockets from the recent deal with Santo Domingo to send Haitian canecutters into the Dominican Republic. The income from this agreement, perhaps as much as \$400,000, will be added to Duvalier's "non-fiscal funds"--a personal pot used to maintain his power structure.

Some US newspapers have already labeled the contract a "slave labor" agreement.

4. France

[redacted] the main accomplishment of the Kosygin visit was to establish the framework for Franco-Soviet economic cooperation. The two countries agreed to set up a high-level commission to coordinate economic and scientific efforts as well as a number of mixed-manned study groups to work on specific problems.

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De Gaulle is now debating whether or not to remain in COCOM, the Western committee for coordinating policy on the sale of strategic items to Communist countries.

5. Egypt

Nasir claims that he will be able to get 850,000 tons of wheat, thanks to help from the Soviets. This is enough to meet his requirements through the middle of next year.

The Moscow commitment calls for shipping some of the wheat and lending foreign exchange to buy the rest through commercial channels. This is quite a departure; [redacted] Moscow not long ago agreed to help Cairo with only 250,000 tons. The switch can be attributed to the good Soviet harvest.

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6. Nigeria

British troubleshooter Malcolm McDonald's talks with Gowon and with the Eastern military governor have not brought the two sides appreciably closer to agreement, but our embassy in Lagos is cautiously encouraged by this first sign of communication developing between them.

So far the two protagonists are fully agreed on only one point--that time is running against a compromise.

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